



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Learn Welsh - Swansea Bay Region
Academi Hywel Teifi
Talbot Building
Swansea University
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Swansea
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by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region

On 1st August 2016, full responsibility for the Welsh for Adults sector was transferred to the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre restructured provision across Wales, and established 11 providers. One of these is Learn Welsh - Swansea Bay Region.

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region receives a core grant of £900,305 during 2018/19 from the National Centre for Learning Welsh to teach Welsh for Adults in the areas of Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot.

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region employs around 50 staff, the majority of whom are part-time tutors, and 17 are core staff. The head of the provider also acts as the Director of Academi Hywel Teifi. The Business and Strategic Development Manager is responsible for running the provider from day to day.

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region provides a range of different courses, from Entry to Proficiency levels, including mainstream Welsh for Adults, Welsh in the Workplace, Welsh for the Family and Work Welsh courses. It also provides a programme of informal learning opportunities for learners to practise and extend their Welsh skills outside the classroom. During 2017/18, over 1,400 adults enrolled on the provider's mainstream courses.

Summary

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region is a close-knit and inclusive community that provides beneficial care and support for its learners. Most learners, on the whole, become increasingly confident in the language and develop a range of linguistic skills, with the main emphasis on speaking the language in useful and meaningful contexts. Nearly all learners are very clear about their reasons for learning the Welsh language. Most enjoy learning a great deal and are enthusiastic and ambitious learners.

Most tutors plan lessons effectively in order to meet learners' needs. They vary the activities in their lessons skilfully and fire learners' enthusiasm when introducing and practising language.

Most tutors provide useful and stimulating oral feedback, which helps learners to improve important aspects of their work. However, tutors are not consistent in the way in which they give learners feedback on how to improve their written work. As a result, learners too often continue to make the same mistakes.

Provision at Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region includes a wide and beneficial range of formal and informal opportunities to practise the language.

Leaders and managers have established a clear vision and purposeful strategic aims, which are consistent with the plans of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Senior leaders have succeeded in maintaining a high standard of provision through a period of restructuring.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve feedback on learners' written work
- R2 Improve the use of materials and electronic resources during lessons in order to enrich and ensure consistency in teaching and learning experiences
- R3 Work with learners to ensure that their views have a meaningful influence on provision
- R4 Refine lines of management and accountability for specific areas

What happens next

The provider will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. The National Centre for Learning Welsh will monitor progress against those recommendations.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most learners at Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region participate very positively and enthusiastically in their lessons. They recall previous learning successfully and build on it effectively. As a result, many make strong progress towards achieving their personal goals.

In lessons, nearly all learners listen attentively to the tutor and are able to understand the area's natural and dialectal language successfully. Most learners are curious and keen to expand their understanding and linguistic skills continuously. On the whole, learners across the levels are increasingly confident and ambitious in terms of achieving fluency in the Welsh language. They develop as independent learners, and use dictionaries and electronic resources purposefully to extend their skills. Many use the Welsh language spontaneously to communicate with the tutor and complete tasks with other learners.

A minority of learners benefit from taking part in Welsh activities in the community, and this reinforces their communication skills and their ability to use them in unfamiliar situations, for example by going on trips to learn about Welsh history and culture.

In line with their level, many learners are confident speakers. At the higher levels, many speak with ease and flexibility, and use broad and varied vocabulary. Advanced learners on Siawns am Sgwrs courses succeed in holding extended conversations on a very wide range of interesting topics skilfully. For example, they are able to deal with subjects as different as the religious revival of 1904-1905 and the virtues of fast food that is produced by international companies.

Many learners at all levels develop their reading skills soundly and understand the content of increasingly challenging texts. At Entry level, they read short sentences regularly, and by the Intermediate and Advanced levels, they enjoy reading articles and novels. In the best examples, learners combine this with effective oracy and writing skills, extend their vocabulary beneficially and respond meaningfully, both orally and in writing. Many learners read aloud successfully, and use appropriate pronunciation and intonation.

Across the different levels, many learners develop their writing skills appropriately. Many at Entry and Foundation level succeed in writing short sentences, and use rudimentary syntax and correct mutations, on the whole. Many learners on Intermediate and Advanced level courses succeed in writing extended pieces for different purposes. They make sound progress when moving from personal and autobiographical pieces to more abstract and sophisticated themes on burning issues, such as the environment. At Intermediate level, this can be seen in the work of learners on intensive courses, in particular. These learners create effective extended pieces and use a beneficial range of syntax and verb tenses to express their opinions clearly. However, a few learners at Intermediate and Advanced level continue to make basic errors in writing that they do not make orally. For example, they use adjectives improperly before nouns. Too often, these learners confuse the forms of the verb 'bod' in the present and imperfect tenses, or omit them completely at the beginning of sentences.

Many learners complete their courses successfully. During the last two years, all learners who have followed online courses at Entry and Proficiency level have completed them, and a majority have completed combined courses at Entry and Foundation level. A few learners choose to sit Welsh for Adults examinations. Most of these learners succeed in the examinations, and a few have gained distinction.

Over the last two years, around half of learners have continued to learn on courses during the following year.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region is a community of enthusiastic and ambitious learners. Most are able to express clearly why they are learning Welsh and show a high level of motivation. For example, a few are learning for professional reasons, such as lecturers who are aware of the increasing demand for Welsh-medium courses. Many learners are also keen to learn for family and cultural reasons.

A minority take beneficial advantage of opportunities to use and extend their Welsh skills by attending informal learning events that are organised by the provider and activities in the community, for example by attending 'Dewch i Ganu' sessions, which encourage networking and practising the Welsh language through music and singing. A few learners take responsibility for their own learning by organising social meetings to practise the language with each other and local fluent Welsh speakers. When they are given an opportunity, learners are willing to express their opinion on provision positively.

Nearly all learners enjoy their learning greatly, in an environment in which they feel safe. They are aware of the additional support that is available to them and know whom to approach if they have any problems. They feel comfortable seeking support and advice from tutors about their learning, and are confident that they will be sure to help them.

Many learners make valuable use of social media to ask questions and use the Welsh language in a semi-formal manner with the support of their tutors. Many learners show strong commitment to the learning process. They complete homework regularly and practise by using interactive resources beneficially in their own time to develop their linguistic skills.

In lessons, nearly all learners concentrate well and show obvious perseverance when learning and using new linguistic elements. They take pride in their progress. Many undertake tasks in the classroom purposefully, and use new syntax and vocabulary successfully. Most learners work effectively individually. They are very willing to participate fully in activities by working together productively in pairs and groups. Nearly all are welcoming towards visitors and take advantage of the opportunity to practise their Welsh with them. Nearly all learners respect the contributions of others, listen politely to each other and respond in a measured way when other learners disagree with them. The ethos of co-operation and mutual respect, in which learners help and support each other, is a positive feature across the provision. In many lessons, learners at all levels support their fellow learners who are finding a task difficult and encourage those who are less confident.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

There is a strong sense of community in the classes, which nurtures learning successfully. Nearly all tutors establish positive working relationships with their learners. They engage their learners' interest enthusiastically, and are caring and very supportive of them.

Most tutors know their learners well and succeed in planning appropriately to meet their learning needs. Their lessons have clear objectives and they plan effectively in order to ensure that all learners are given appropriate opportunities to reinforce their previous learning and contribute during lessons. These tutors ensure that their lessons have a suitable pace. They vary activities in their lessons skilfully and fire learners' enthusiasm when introducing and practising the language.

Most tutors have sound subject knowledge and are good language models. They use the Welsh language skilfully, in formal and informal contexts, as a medium of teaching and learning during lessons.

Many tutors have high expectations of their learners. They break the ice effectively at the beginning of the lesson and make stimulating use of learning resources, for example language games, songs and a range of appealing visual and audio prompts. As a result, they succeed in engaging learners' interest effectively and challenge them to extend their language skills. In a few lessons, tutors do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to participate actively in their own learning and, as a result, they are too passive.

A majority of tutors are flexible in pursuing topics that are of interest to learners, and allow them to develop and practise their language in relevant and beneficial contexts. These tutors encourage individual learners to present information about themselves at length, and about a range of interesting discussion topics. They encourage learners to question each other in order to develop natural and extensive conversations.

A majority of tutors give due attention to the importance of using the Welsh language outside the classroom, and promote the provider's informal learning activities appropriately, for example a walk for learners who were learning about the history and culture of the Afan valley.

A few tutors adopt beneficial creative methods to enrich learners' experiences, for example by using information and communication technology (ICT) to introduce new vocabulary and idioms across a range of current subjects. However, on the whole, tutors do not make enough use of ICT, even when the resources are available to them.

Most tutors give useful and stimulating oral feedback during lessons. This is a great help to learners to improve important aspects of their work, for example in pronouncing the language and expanding their vocabulary. Many tutors ask questions effectively in order to check learners' understanding, deepen their understanding and extend their responses. On the whole, tutors allow conversations to flow rather than draw attention to minor errors or the occasional English word. However, in a few cases, tutors miss opportunities to draw learners' attention to common errors and practise them, for example when responding positively or negatively to questions.

On the whole, tutors do not make regular and beneficial use of the provider's feedback policy. Many tutors provide learners with supportive written feedback, draw attention to errors and discuss them orally. However, learners are not expected to refine their work as a result of receiving these comments, for example by practising difficult syntax in order to master it. In a few lessons, tutors are too dependent on learners to assess their own work.

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region provides learning experiences that stimulate, challenge and support learners to learn Welsh, whatever their standard. The provider plans appropriately to meet the needs of learners and local employers, in addition to meeting national priorities, for example courses for staff from local English-medium schools and a course for medical and nursing students. Recently, the provider has been prominent in providing specifically for local communities, for example a temporary drop-in unit in Port Talbot and courses for ethnic minority communities in the area.

Provision includes a suitable range of formal and informal learning opportunities. As a result, the provider ensures that clear routes of continuity and progression are available for learners to develop their language skills. Over time, the provider has increased the number of supplementary activities that are provided appropriately to reinforce core provision, for example 'Sadyrnau Siarad', termly residential courses and examination revision courses.

Beneficial additional opportunities are provided to support learning outside the classroom, for example on walks or by visiting the theatre. Two local Welsh centres, Tŷ Tawe and Tŷ'r Gwrhyd, are used purposefully to conduct supportive activities, for example reading clubs, where learners are given opportunities to discuss various texts, including stories, poems, novels and plays. However, the provider does not promote the value of these additional opportunities consistently enough.

Overall, tutors use resources effectively, including educational courses. On the whole, they are stimulating and relevant materials. However, a very few materials are used that do not always reflect contemporary attitudes.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Nearly all tutors provide good and constructive individual support for learners in their care. They ensure a supportive and stimulating environment, in which most learners feel safe and eager to participate positively.

The provider provides a range of useful information to help learners choose the course that is most relevant to them. The provider's guidelines, which are given to all learners, include the necessary information and refer to relevant policies and the details of staff to be contacted, if required. By providing relevant documents, such as the code of conduct and complaints policy, the provider strives successfully to ensure that learners know whom to approach should any problems arise.

The provider organises regular and useful opportunities for learners to practise their Welsh outside the classroom. A broad programme of beneficial supplementary learning is organised, such as 'Sadyrnau Siarad', based on themes such as St Dwynwen and Christmas traditions in Wales. Various informal learning opportunities are provided, for example a rugby and curry night, and coffee mornings, to enable learners to interact with each other in Welsh.

Tutors support learners to take responsibility for organising opportunities to practise themselves, including social meetings and writing a column in the local community Welsh language newspaper. The provider also organises interesting trips. These include visits to the St Fagans Christmas Festival and the Urdd Eisteddfod, in order to provide beneficial opportunities for learners to expand their knowledge of Welsh heritage.

The provider has appropriate arrangements for learners to record any additional learning needs online during registration. The provider takes advantage of being part of Swansea University to provide beneficial support to learners with additional learning needs through the expertise that is available within the organisation. In most cases, learners receive appropriate support, particularly in terms of visual and hearing impairments.

The provider seeks learners' views regularly, for example through questionnaires to seek opinions and by asking learners face-to-face as part of the lesson observation and quality assurance process. However, systems for gathering and analysing learners' views are not thorough enough to ensure participation from a majority of learners. As a result, the effect of learners' views on provision is limited.

The provider's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

Learn Welsh – Swansea Bay Region is a core part of Academi Hywel Teifi within the university. The provider's leaders have established a clear vision and strategic aims (based on the Academy's vision) that comply with the plans of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. This vision is to 'support learners of all ages and educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds to learn Welsh or develop their skills in the language'. Their aim is to help the Welsh language to thrive, not only in the Swansea Bay Region, but also nationally. Management of the provider has been challenging, due to the organisation that was inherited following the restructuring of Welsh for Adults in 2016, and because of the implications of protecting the terms and conditions of employment of staff from two external organisations. Managers continue to address some of these challenges in terms of managing change. Senior leaders have re-structured the provider appropriately as a result of the re-organisation of Welsh for Adults nationally and the dissolution of South West Wales Welsh for Adults Centre. As part of the re-structuring process, there were voluntary redundancies, early retirements and compulsory redundancies. There was a long legal process of assimilation, which is ongoing. Although the re-organisation has succeeded in creating a clear management structure and ensuring new contracts, leaders have not yet succeeded fully in creating an ethos of working together as one team. However, senior leaders have succeeded in maintaining a high standard of provision throughout the difficult period of re-structuring.

Leaders at all levels place a strong focus on learners' wellbeing and progress, providing learning opportunities in the community and providing education of the highest standard to learners. Leaders' roles are also clear and coherent, they have suitable job descriptions and clear responsibilities. All members of staff have purposeful job descriptions, including core tutors and associate tutors. Systems of

accountability are clear within the structure of the university and the provider. Performance management processes for staff and managers are effective, and they address underperformance issues rigorously. Although job descriptions are clear on the whole, there is no certainty about who is responsible for specific aspects of provision, for example developing the use of ICT, overview of individual learners' needs, and the learner's voice.

There are clear communication systems between managers and tutors, which include a series of suitable meetings that focus on ensuring learners' high standards and wellbeing. The quality bulletin is used effectively to communicate with all staff about the provider's work and the latest developments in the area.

The provider has effective systems for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Managers analyse performance data and observe lessons regularly. The observation process is an additional means of seeking learners' views, and provides an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. However, although leaders gather performance data and learners' views, they do not use them effectively enough to ensure improvement.

The planning working group collects and discusses all results on a monthly basis. As a result, quality assurance processes create a suitable picture of strengths and weaknesses in the provision's standards.

A suitable training programme is available from the provider, which focuses on initial training for new or inexperienced tutors and training on national issues, for example the new national courses. The provider has an annual training programme. Elementary ICT training is available, which is based on staff requirements in the performance management meetings. However, not all tutors are able to attend this training due to their availability. The provider does not have a proactive training scheme to expand the skills of teaching staff.

There is effective co-operation within Academi Hywel Teifi and the wider university in order to take advantage of relevant expertise, for example to develop Work Welsh courses for medical and nursing students as part of their core training, and share that expertise nationally.

The provider benefits from the organisational support of the university without any top-slicing of the core grant. The university top-slices a sum, from income from learning fees only, which is equivalent to approximately 10% of the provider grant. An example of this support was the creation of two Trainee Tutor posts, funded centrally by Academi Hywel Teifi. The provider meets the requirements of the National Centre within its budget, and manages its budget effectively and sensibly.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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